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Regional Oral History Office

University History Series

Marguerite Kulp Johnston

and

Joseph R. Mixer

STUDENT HOUSING, WELFARE, AND THE ASUC

Interviews Conducted by
Harriet Nathan

PREFACE

Under a grant from the University of California Alumni Foundation, the Regional Oral History Office has been conducting a series of interviews with persons who have made a significant contribution to the development of the University of California at Berkeley. A list of University History interviews follows, including an earlier group which had been conducted in cooperation with the Centennial History Project, directed by Professor Walton E. Bean. The Alumni Foundation grant made it possible to continue this University-centered series, of which this manuscript is a part.

The University History interviews have benefited greatly from the expert advice and assistance of Richard E. Erickson, Executive Manager of the Alumni Association; Arthur M. Arlett, Intercollegiate Athletic Coordinator for Alumni and Public Relations; and Verne A. Stadtman, Centennial Editor.

The Regional Oral History Office was established to tape record autobiographical interviews with persons prominent in recent California history. The Office is under the administrative supervision of the Director of the Bancroft Library.

Willa Baum
Head, Regional Oral
History Office

15 July 1968
Regional Oral History Office
Room 486 The Bancroft Library
University of California
Berkeley, California

Interviews in the University History Series which have been completed by the Regional Oral History Office.

SERIES I

Birge, Raymond Thayer	<u>Raymond Thayer Birge, Physicist.</u> 1960
Chaney, Ralph Works	<u>Ralph Works Chaney, Ph.D., Paleobotanist, Conservationist.</u> 1960
Hutchison, Claude B.	<u>The College of Agriculture, University of California, 1922-1952.</u> 1962
Lessing, Ferdinand D.	<u>Early Years.</u> 1963
Lenzen, Victor F.	<u>Physics and Philosophy.</u> 1965
Merritt, Ralph P.	<u>After Me Cometh a Builder, the Recollections of Ralph Palmer Merritt.</u> 1962
Meyer, Karl F.	<u>Medical Research and Public Health.</u> In process.
Mitchell, Lucy Sprague	<u>Pioneering in Education.</u> 1962
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Porter, Robert Langley	<u>Robert Langley Porter, Physician, Teacher, and Guardian of the Public Health.</u> 1960
Richardson, Leon J.	<u>Berkeley Culture, University of California Highlights, and University Extension, 1892-1960.</u> 1962
Shields, Peter J.	<u>Reminiscences.</u> 1954
Sproul, Ida Wittschen	<u>Duty, Devotion and Delight in the President's House, University of California.</u> 1961
Stevens, Frank C.	<u>Forty Years in the Office of the President, University of California, 1905-1945.</u> 1959
Treadway, Walter	<u>Correspondence and Papers on Langley Porter Clinic.</u> (Bound into Langley Porter interview.)

- Waring, Henry C. Henry C. Waring on University Extension. 1960
- Woods, Baldwin M. University of California Extension. 1957
- Wurster, William Wilson College of Environmental Design, University of California, Campus Planning, and Architectural Practice. 1964

SERIES II

Interviews fully or partially funded by the University of California Alumni Foundation.

- Blaisdell, Allen C. Foreign Students and the Berkeley International House, 1928-1961. 1968
- Corley, James V. Serving the University in Sacramento. 1969
- Cross, Ira Brown Portrait of an Economics Professor. 1967
- Cruess, William V. A Half Century in Food and Wine Technology. 1967
- Davidson, Mary Blossom The Dean of Women and the Importance of Students. 1967
- Dennes, William R. Philosophy and the University Since 1915. 1970
- Donnelly, Ruth The University's Role in Housing Services. 1970
- Ebright, Carroll "Ky" California Varsity and Olympics Crew Coach. 1968
- Evans, Clinton W. California Athlete, Coach, Administrator, Ambassador. 1968
- Hamilton, Brutus Student Athletics and the Voluntary Discipline. 1967
- Hays, William Charles Order, Taste, and Grace in Architecture. 1968
- Johnston, Marguerite Kulp
 and
Mixer, Joseph R. Student Housing, Welfare, and the ASUC. 1970
- Lehman, Benjamin H. Recollections and Reminiscences of Life in the Bay Area from 1920 Onward. 1969
- Towle, Katherine A. Administration and Leadership. 1970
- Underhill, Robert M. University of California Lands, Finances, and Investment. 1968
- Wessels, Glenn A. Education of an Artist. 1967
- Witter, Jean C. The University, the Community, and the Lifeblood of Business. 1968



Marguerite Kulp Johnston

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INTRODUCTION

Marguerite Kulp Johnston has been associated with the Berkeley campus of the University of California for nearly thirty years, in turn as an undergraduate, a graduate student, an alumna and a University employee. In the late 1930's and early '40's, when student activists were focussing their attention primarily on campus issues, she was a member of the student Welfare Council, and of the Associated Students' Executive Committee; she lived in a co-operative dormitory, Stebbins Hall, and worked as secretary to Scott Wilson, then manager of Bowles Hall. She remembers the Executive Committee decisions taken while the Campanile chimes sounded midnight, and the coffee-shop debates that lasted even later.

Student housing was a major issue among concerned students of the era preceding 1945, before the University moved to provide funds for residence halls. From her vantage point within the student councils, Mrs. Johnston had a student-eye view of housing, as well as ASUC finance and structure and other pre-World War II concerns.

This interview was conducted in the Regional Oral History Office in a single session on January 5, 1967, and was subsequently reviewed and edited by Mrs. Johnston. It is one of the University History series supported by a grant from the Alumni Foundation, and is produced under

the direction of the Office Head, Mrs. Willa Baum. Other housing-related interviews include those with Mary B. Davidson, Dean of Women; Ruth N. Donnelly, Supervisor of Housing Services; and Jean C. Witter, Regent and President of the Alumni Association.

For Marguerite Johnston, interest in University affairs did not end with student days, but continued through membership in alumni groups and a variety of campus jobs, including that of social secretary to the wife of the University's President. At the time of the interview, Mrs. Johnston was working with Mrs. Clark Kerr. She was to stay on to aid Mrs. Harry Wellman during the period of transition and the naming of a new president for the University of California.

The campus affiliations have been zestful for Marguerite Johnston. Her dark eyes sparkle with the recollection of student battles past; she speaks with enthusiasm of the present-day Alumnae Hostesses and the newest campus developments. Tempered by her cool judgment and dry wit, Marguerite Johnston's regard for the University seems both realistic and durable.

Harriet Nathan
Interviewer

November, 1967
Regional Oral History Office
Room 486 The Bancroft Library
University of California
Berkeley, California

STUDENT ACTIVISTS IN THE EARLY 1940's

January 5, 1967

Nathan: Were you involved in housing problems as a student?

Johnston: I was thinking that at that time, of course, as Ruth Donnelly has undoubtedly said, there was no separate housing office at all. I think the approval of the dean's office was mainly on rules regarding such matters as lock-out and house mothers. The Student Housing Office did the rating.

Nathan: I'd like to ask you about the Student Housing Office. Was it functioning during these years--'39 to '43?

Johnston: Yes.

Nathan: And it was run by the students?

Johnston: Yes.

Nathan: What did they do?

Johnston: They inspected the houses for minimum standards: so much light per square foot, air, other conditions. They really set up the first standards in health, as I remember, before the University did anything about this. Also the students ran listings of the houses that were adequate. The housing board members were very busy. They would go out in teams, and look over the rooms, measure them, and see how clean

Johnston: they were being kept; they would check the kind of toilet facilities, I remember, in the boarding houses. Their work was all with boarding houses. I don't think they concerned themselves with individuals who were just renting private rooms to one student in a private home.

Nathan: Then did the student office have a list of housing?

Johnston: Yes. I think they must have had a card file where the students could come up and look. I don't remember the publicity in the Daily Cal, but I suppose they did have it.

Nathan: This was, then, an ASUC activity?

Johnston: Oh, yes.

Nathan: Where was the office, do you recall?

Johnston: Yes. It was right next to the Women's Club Rooms in Stephens Union. There was a little office there, right next to the restroom, just beyond the restroom off of the Women's Club Rooms. It was the Welfare Council office. Later it was used for the reps-at-large. I don't know what happened to it after that; I lost track.

Welfare Council

Nathan: Do you remember individuals who were active in Welfare Council?

Johnston: I remember Dick Goldman was the chairman of the Housing

Johnston: Board. And there was a man named Joe Lareau. He lived in one of the basements around here someplace. I think he lived in the student co-ops for a little while. He was very interested in student housing. And he drew up a very elaborate and detailed plan for low-cost student housing, and worked very hard to get it before the University. I suspect he probably was drafted in the middle of all of this. He lives in Marin County now and is still interested in the student co-op, and low-cost housing. It might be interesting for him to talk to you, because he was really involved in housing after Goldman, so he was the next generation of students. Dick Goldman is married to Rhoda Haas. Then there was another Welfare Council member who is on the campus now, Dan Koshland. He was the Health Board chairman. I can't think of the Labor Board chairman right now. It was a very nice bunch of people. The chairman of Welfare Council was Morrie Glickfeld that year. That was when I was secretary. The next year it was Doug North.

Housing Questionnaire

Nathan: Doug North's name reminds me of the housing questionnaire. Was it passed out to students as they came to register?

Nathan: Were you familiar with that questionnaire?

Johnston: I remember the questionnaire, but I don't remember--I guess it must have been circulated that way. How else would they have gotten it around? I remember working on that.

Nathan: What sort of thing did you do with the questionnaire?

Johnston: Oh, I don't remember specifically. I remember reading it over and working out the questions to make sure the board found out what they wanted to know, and mulling it over, and kicking it back and forth.

Nathan: What was going to happen to the questionnaire?

Johnston: I think this was supposedly just ammunition to show the University that the needs were great and the housing provisions were few. Something needed to be done, and--here we have all these facts and all these answers, and--do something. It didn't do any good.

Nathan: That was just before World War II.

Was this for men, also?

Johnston: Yes, anybody.

Need for Low-Cost Housing

Johnston: That was just at the time when they were going to build Stern Hall, and there was a lot of feeling among the

Johnston: students; it should show up in the Daily Cal someplace, I would imagine. Some of the kids were furious with Mrs. Stern because she was building this luxury housing for students and there wasn't any low-cost housing for students. Here was all this money going for 120 girls. There were great plans drawn up and estimates made showing how the same amount of money could house many, many more students. They tried to see her, I think, and tried to give her the idea that she could build less expensive housing and take care of many, many more girls than she was taking care of.

This may all be wrong, but as I recall it, the rumor that came back was that she felt that low-cost housing could be provided by the state, but the state would never provide the more elegant, or gracious housing. So therefore she felt that this was where her money should go. That's where it went. But the students were quite disgusted at the time.

Nathan: And they were really concerned about low-cost housing?

Johnston: This was the big problem at the time. When I came to Berkeley in '39 I had applied over a year before to the USCA, (University Student Co-operative Association) the co-op houses, because that was the only low-cost housing around. Everything was very expensive compared with it. They had about 600 students, I think, then in the co-op. There was one girls' house of about a hundred, and four or five men's houses altogether. That was \$24.50 a month, for three meals a day,

Johnston: seven days a week. I think then Bowles Hall was running \$60 a month, something like that. So it was less than half. Of course, Bowles was considered one of the best houses around. I was also secretary to the manager of Bowles Hall.

Nathan: Was that Scott Wilson?

Johnston: Yes. Scott was house manager and I was his secretary. I used to trot up to Bowles and work on their admissions. I remember particularly working on admission letters and letters of recommendation, things like that. I've forgotten the details now.

Nathan: What was the basis on which people were admitted to Bowles?

Johnston: You had to apply and you had to have so many letters of recommendation. I forget the number.

Nathan: Was there a means test of any kind?

Johnston: No, but if you couldn't afford it, this wasn't the place to apply.

Residence Halls

Johnston: As for other University housing, they couldn't build at all for years, and then they still didn't build.

Nathan: I guess not until about '45...

Johnston: Even that was just sort of temporary. They kind of backed into housing. I always had the feeling that Berkeley went

Johnston: into housing reluctantly, without really wanting to. I remember when [Clark] Kerr was Chancellor, he wanted the residence halls built--it was on the list that went to Sacramento for money. There were people in the state-wide administration that did not really want Berkeley to have residence halls.

The halls had a high priority when the list came out of the Regents' office, and by the time it got to Sacramento, housing was way down near the bottom of the list. Somehow it just slipped down. Kerr was very upset. There had been a Regents' meeting and he had worked very hard to get the Regents to see how important this was. But it finally got through. It took a long time. He may regret it now--maybe he's sorry they ever put up those residence halls.

Nathan: It's hard to catch up with the need, or anticipate it.

Johnston: Oh, it certainly is. I think, actually, now things are not too bad, according to Mrs. Donnelly. Even though they had trouble filling the halls a year or so ago, now they seem to have stabilized pretty well. I believe they have only built three out of the nine units they had thought they might build. If they are smart, I think they won't build any more.

Apartments

Nathan: There seems to be some interest in the possibility of

Nathan: apartments, rather than residence halls.

Johnston: Yes, there are smaller groups in apartments; no rules on visitation; you eat when you feel like it. I have a friend whose daughter is at Santa Barbara; we visited her. She had lived in a dormitory there, and then moved into an apartment. We were talking about it, and she said it was really cheaper this way.

My eyes opened. She said, "Here we have a living room, I don't have to share my bedroom, I have a bath. Our costs are less than they were in the dormitory." This is quite a point. In your own apartment, you don't have to go down to the dining room; you can fix yourself a snack for breakfast. Of course, girls don't eat as much; that, I think, is the difference. Boys don't want to cook, but they eat more, so it's cheaper for them to live in a residence hall.

Stebbins Hall and Regulations

Nathan: As an undergraduate, you were living in a co-operative, in Stebbins Hall, originally. Then you stayed a couple of years?

Johnston: Two years.

Nathan: Did you feel that the regulations were onerous at the time?

Johnston: No, not really. I felt they were good regulations. I did feel that they didn't specifically apply to me. That was

Johnston: because I had worked in San Francisco for two years before I came to college, so I was a nineteen year old freshman, and my roommate happened to be a fifteen year old freshman. I felt they were quite good rules for young freshmen. I didn't really consider myself not a freshman, but I had not been used to quite such tight regulations. I think that most of the time I complied with them. Being in at ten o'clock seemed reasonable enough on a week night. I had a lot of things to do. If I wanted to stay out late, which a year or so later when I was going steady, I did, I usually did stay out late. We managed to sneak in. Everybody does that, anyway, regardless of age. We were pretty good, really. Even in retrospect, I think there is a disadvantage to having all this freedom; it was kind of nice; when you had a date that was a dud, you wanted lock-out to come so you could say good-bye. With this business of staying out as late as you want, it will be harder to handle farewells. You have no excuse. I didn't feel that they were bad regulations. Sometimes it was kind of a nuisance to rush home to make it by ten or ten-thirty. But the house wasn't run so strictly that if you broke a rule a little bit everybody got terribly upset about it.

Nathan: How did the co-ops determine who was admissible?

Johnston: It was on a first come, first serve basis. You just sent in your five dollars with your application and you got on the

Johnston: list. And when there was a vacancy, you got in. When I lived in Stebbins, it was the only girls' co-op hall at that time. It wasn't until after I moved out that they opened another girls' hall up the street, Kingman, which has now been torn down. Then they opened another one, Sherman Hall. Now they have quite a few girls' houses. I've been rather close to the co-op housing picture throughout the years. I've been on their Women's Advisory Committee, and so I've stayed close to that particular picture. The cost is still much, much less than the University residence halls.

Nathan: What is the situation now with the women's co-operative housing? Is there much demand for this kind of accommodation?

Johnston: I think so. The pattern last year--and I don't know what it is this year, because I haven't talked to any of the girls yet--is the same as in most of the other residences. The girls move in for a year or a semester, then they move out and want to find an apartment; so there is more mobility than when I was in school, when girls tended to stay two, three, four years in the residences. But now the co-ops have a long waiting list. I don't recall the exact monthly cost figures, but you work five hours a week and that's not much of a strain, serving or helping in the kitchen or on the switchboard, or maybe cleaning halls. Nothing too strenuous. The accommodations aren't fancy, but the students

Johnston: seem to like it because they can do whatever they want to their rooms. They can paint them, they can decorate them, rearrange them, do almost anything they want.

Nathan: The house that Prytanean sponsored, Ritter Hall, was sold.

Johnston: That was another kind of problem. That's kind of off our little student talk here. First of all, it was very tightly run by the Prytanean alumnae ladies, who were a little older than my vintage, which puts them quite a ways along in years. In the past they had always had a long waiting list too, like all the rest of the co-op houses. But you also had to have recommendations from several people in your community, and they had quite strict rules there.

It just worked out that girls could live elsewhere. Many girls found they could live for very little, actually less than the residence halls, and I suppose as little as the co-ops. They just weren't finding girls that were willing to put up with the discipline the Prytanean ladies wanted. Then the ladies, I think, were getting a little tired of running this house. Nobody knew they were doing all this work, and all the burden was on their shoulders. I was in Prytanean, and I was involved in this only slightly, but I think part of it was that all the rest of us felt they really wanted to do this. Nobody else got involved because these ladies really loved it, I think, secretly, down deep, and didn't really want any younger alumnae involved in it,

Johnston: anyway. So they just kept on handling it and went their own way. Many of us were concerned when Ritter Hall was sold so quickly. I think they gave it away; they sold it for \$75,000. That's not much in that particular location.

Attitudes Toward Regulations

Nathan: So it wasn't entirely a lack of demand on the part of the students.

Johnston: They felt it was. They were saying that we were just taking people off the street, and we didn't have a big long waiting list any more. I think this was all true, mainly because these ladies just could not face the fact that girls simply aren't putting up with the kind of regulations they had ten, fifteen, or twenty years ago. Look at Stanford: set your own rules in the dormitories. This is what students want, and they won't live in places where they can't do this. I don't think you can buck it, really, because the students are just going to move out. They can live other places.

I don't think these ladies were ready to cope with the thought that this place was going to be run by the students, and they wouldn't have any control over what went on. The student co-ops have a couple of houses that have gone off

Johnston: the approved list just because the girls have decided they would rather set the rules and regulations themselves and not be approved by the Dean's office. [Dean of Women] And I think that's all right. In fact, the University would probably be smart to stop approving anything. [Laughter] They could wash their hands of all the responsibility for what happened in these houses.

Nathan: I gather from Mrs. Donnelly that she believes in fewer rules.

Johnston: I think she has the picture very clearly, because she talks with so many of the students. It's kind of interesting, the swing now. When we were in school, the University's stated position was: "We are not concerned with where students live. We provide the education, and students provide their own housing." This was a general policy. All of us who were interested in student welfare and student housing were protesting this, saying, "Here you've got all these students living in hovels and living in basements. And people charging exorbitant rents for nothing but a pallet and a toilet down the hall that doesn't flush," and promoted dormitories where students could live healthfully.

Now the University has come into the dormitory business-- Berkeley came in late. They were nearly the last campus, I think, to start building dormitories in the University system. I think UCLA started before Berkeley. Now, the University

Johnston: is really in a position where it would be better off if it didn't have any dormitories, because parents or other people complain, "Our children are going to rack and ruin; here they are all sleeping together," or whatever they think they are doing. Now the University is in the middle; it has the dormitories and can't control the students. Maybe the University was right in the first place.

Nathan: Thinking back to your coming to school from '39 to '43, when the students were running the housing listing, were you still on campus when the listing was taken over by the University's housing services?

Johnston: I can't remember when that happened.

Nathan: I think '47 was the date when the University Housing Office was established, separately from the Dean's office.

Johnston: I wasn't on campus then. I came back and did graduate work in '45 and '46. But I had a child in '47 and that kind of cut off my concern with housing.

Welfare Council and Student Concerns

Nathan: You were secretary of the Welfare Commission?

Johnston: Welfare Council.

Nathan: Secretary of the Welfare Council, then representative-at-large, then representative-at-large on the Executive Committee. So

Nathan: you were really in the student activities. Would you say that housing then was one of the major concerns?

Johnston: Oh, yes. Well, I don't think campus-wide it was particularly, but among the concerned students or the active students it was pretty much. I remember a lot of people were very annoyed at the Alumni Association because they wanted you to join with a life membership. They put on a big push every June to get everybody to sign up, at least to pay \$10. And many of my friends who graduated in '40, '41 and '42, particularly, would go down to the Alumni office and would say, "Fine, what are you going to do about low-cost housing? When are you going to put up low-cost housing? And if you will, we'll join." And the Alumni Association wasn't interested then. Then the students would say, "Too bad, I'm not going to join." And that would be that. There was a lot of this general feeling that somebody should be doing something about low-cost housing. But the residence halls are still not low-cost housing. It hasn't changed much.

Nathan: Was the question of discrimination in housing discussed at the time?

Johnston: I don't recall that it was, although there was a student relations committee on Welfare Council that handled this issue. One of the big fights that got publicity began when the Claremont Hotel wouldn't let some student group have a

Johnston: dance there because there were Orientals, (it wasn't Negroes) in the group. So there was a big press to boycott the Claremont Hotel. Then it came up again when I was in Ex [Executive] Committee; it came up for a vote before Ex Committee as a recommendation from Welfare Council that the students boycott the Claremont Hotel because of their discriminatory policies. But I don't remember any particular conflict over housing. That doesn't mean there wasn't an issue, though. The student co-ops didn't have any discrimination. My own background experience was that this was a place where anybody could live, so the kids could go on with their education. There weren't very many Negroes around. There were several in the co-op, and a lot of Nisei, and Chinese kids. But it wasn't generally a mixed population.

"Fair Bear" and "Clean Bear"

Nathan: Was there a "Fair Bear" for wage levels and "Clean Bear" for health standards?

Johnston: I don't think there was any "Housing Bear." I remember the other little stickers. They were cute little cartoons that student committees put in the windows of the stores that maintained standards. Housing just had a listing. Labor Board had a "Fair Bear" insignia which they put in

Johnston: stores that paid what they felt were "Fair Bear" wages, which was a minimum of thirty-five cents an hour in 1940.

The Student Health Committee had a "Clean Bear" program in which they inspected the restaurants on Telegraph Avenue where the students ate, to see if their kitchens were really as clean as they should be. But I don't remember whether the Housing Board had any insignia or anything that they gave to the people who had approved houses.

Nathan: There was some indication that the Dean of Women's office did some inspection of housing, for women only.

Johnston: That could be. Mainly they were concerned with house-mothers and check in and check out times, etc., which the Student Housing Board wasn't concerned with. The students were only concerned with the adequacy of the accommodations.

Executive Committee 1941-43

Nathan: Do you recall the faculty advisers or the administration people who were on hand when the Student Welfare Council met? Were there any on Welfare Council?

Johnston: There weren't any. On Ex Committee we had a faculty adviser, a faculty representative, I don't know whether there was another one or not. The business manager of the University sat on the finance committee of Executive Committee. Finance

Johnston: committee was made up of the president, the vice-president, one rep-at-large, and the business manager of the ASUC, and the business manager of the University. And I was the rep-at-large, so I sat on it. I served a longer term than most people because I went in at an odd election time. So I was on fourteen months, I think.

Nathan: What sorts of decisions would this committee make?

Johnston: That was wonderful experience. They set the yearly budget for the ASUC; it ran well over \$500,000. They decided how much would be allocated for the band, how much would be allocated for sports; because the income all came from sports, primarily from football. We had to hire the coaches, and run everything.

Nathan: Of course! The ASUC did hire the coaches. That's how they came to fire Stub Allison. Do you remember that?

Johnston: Yes. We didn't fire Stub Allison. It was done by somebody else. We had a number of other coach problems, but that wasn't one of them. It was really a tremendous thing for a bunch of students to handle.

There was one other person--an Activities Co-ordinating Council chairman--Doug North, who sat in on Finance Committee. At that time, he also happened to be the Welfare Council chairman, so we had a nice majority on Ex Committee. We had terrible fights with the adults.

Nathan: What would the issue be?

Johnston: One thing was always wages. You see, if we improved "Fair Bear" wages, then we had to pay more, and it cost us more. The University was always against raising "Fair Bear" wages, because then they had to pay all their student employees more. Because they had to conform. I remember there was a terrible midnight decision--it was one of these dramatic moments in life--in Ex Committee. Welfare Council was recommending fifty cents an hour, and Ex Committee was supposed to decide. Ralph Fisher was the ASUC president, and he was a very fair-minded person. He'd been on the Welfare Council, too. He wasn't terribly liberal, but he was very fair, and very bright. We had all lobbied like crazy around the table, and had gotten everybody lined up. You know, sit next to someone so you could influence him. It was marvelous fun. The vote came around the table. And there were always a few people, fraternity or somebody, who would vote with the University, and then there were those of us who wouldn't.

So, it was a tie vote. Ralph had to cast the deciding vote. He sat there thinking. And all of a sudden, the Campanile started bonging midnight. There was the dead silence. The room was just packed with people. Everybody holding their breath while the Campanile was bonging away. It was marvelous. I think he voted against it. [Laughter]

It was high drama for the students. And the decision

Johnston: did affect lots and lots of students. A nickel or a dime an hour meant a lot. It was an increase of ten cents. And the University didn't want to raise their budget, so they were usually against these items. We had big fights in there about this.

Doug North and I were famous for wanting to cut out crew. Crew cost lots and lots of money. We kept saying-- I don't know how much it cost, but say \$60,000 was in the budget for crew--and there were only forty to sixty students involved in it-- "All of this money for forty students; it's not fair, because you are cutting out things in which more students could participate. Here's a small group of students, and we're spending all this money on them." Oh, were we ever disliked in athletic circles, because we were known as the people that hated crew. We didn't really hate it at all, it was just that we felt that the money could be used better elsewhere. They did get their budget approved and we did not cut it out. These were the kinds of decisions we had to make. That was a lot of responsibility for a group of young people, I think; very good experience.

Nathan: They were real decisions.

Johnston: That's right. It wasn't sandbox government. I think they were real decisions. Certainly the "Fair Bear" issue was, and a lot of the housing, and the boycott of the Claremont--

Johnston: we all felt pretty strongly about whether we should or shouldn't, and the University man would say, "You know, the Claremont Hotel is good for a lot of business, and we don't want to make them too mad." And the students would say, "But they shouldn't do this." So it went back and forth.

Nathan: Did you have any feeling of continuity between your term of service on the Committee and the earlier times?

Johnston: I personally did because I overlapped so much. That was a period when I thought there were a lot of interesting students around. I liked them; I suppose that's why I thought they were interesting. A lot of Welfare Council people went on to Ex Committee at that point. The vice-president was Kaki Henck; she had been on Welfare Council; Ralph Fisher had been on Welfare Council; then I had come off Welfare Council; and Doug North had become chairman of the Activities Co-ordinating Council. Before 1942 the Activities Chairmen sat on Ex Committee as voting members. Then they changed the [ASUC] constitution so they had Reps-at-large and removed the Activities Chairmen. The Activities people had felt that it took too much of their time; there were too many of them; the Committee became too big, or else they would come only occasionally, when there was an issue they were particularly interested in, and they didn't really have a feeling of the Committee as a whole.

So two councils were set up. The Activities

Johnston: Co-ordinating Council [ACC] was one. They just kept all the activities straight so they wouldn't have conflicts of dates, etc. Then the chairman of ACC sat on Ex Committee to take any problems back and forth. Doug North had maneuvered himself into being chairman. He could sit on Ex Committee with a vote. It was kind of a good committee. As things went, it was pretty fascinating. Kaki and all those people were on six months, and then I was elected in the mid term, in November, and I didn't go out of office until a year from February.

Nathan: That would be '42 and '43?

Johnston: I must have gone on in November of '41, and then I served all through '42, and then I went off in the spring of '43. It was when they were running three semesters. So I was on fourteen months instead of the usual twelve. There was continuity in that sense, in that I had served with one group, that then graduated, then I served with the next group that was elected in June, 1942. The reason for having two mid term Representatives-at-large was to ensure some continuity. Joe Mixer was president after I went out. He had been on Welfare Council, too. Welfare Council had picked up a lot of young juniors and sophomores, that they felt were promising, and tried to encourage them.

Nathan: So during that period, really, Welfare Council had considerable influence on the Executive Committee, partly by

Nathan: reason of people who moved from one to the other.

Johnston: Yes. We had a fight with the Daily Cal in 1942. The Daily Cal at one point were ready to kill us, absolutely murder us, on Ex Committee. I forget what we were going to do-- we were going to cut the salary of the editor or something. It was as we were going into the war and we were pretty short on money, with football games not being played, the men not being around. And we were cutting the budget. I remember one time when I had to go to the Daily Cal to see the editor. I walked in the Daily Cal office, through the Eshleman Hall offices, and there was dead silence as I walked through the room. Everybody stopped and looked around and glared--I felt knives in my back.

Nathan: Do you remember who the editor was?

Johnston: There were a lot of editors. They changed every six months. There was Gordon Furth, who was editor. Then Eugene Danaher and Warren Unna, who was a particular friend of mine. He was editor in '42 or '43.

Nathan: What happened, do you recall? Did you cut the salaries of the Daily Cal staff?

Johnston: I don't remember, but I think so. I remember that one of the few students that I really loathed was the manager of the Daily Cal at that time--so much so that I've got a mental block on his name. The reason I felt so strongly was because he would pull dirty tactics and say, "We don't

Johnston: want you to vote tonight. Wait 'till next week, and we'll have more figures on this." Then during the intervening week he would work to change votes; at the next week's meeting he wouldn't have any more figures at all, which we knew at the time, but you couldn't prove that. He made me so mad, because I thought he was a real dirty fighter, and I just couldn't stand him. The rest of us were all playing it square. If we didn't have anything to offer, we wouldn't say we did. But he didn't play that way.

Nathan: When you would be sitting around the table discussing various issues, did you have the feeling that the University or the administration was taking a different position, or just that the individual who was sitting there was arguing with you?

Johnston: I think mostly it was the official position. We had sat with two deans. We didn't care for the first one. The other one was a nice one.

Nathan: Was Elmer Goldsworthy one of them?

Johnston: Not Goldsworthy. He must have come before my time. We always felt we couldn't trust [Hurford] Stone. He would be nice to your face and knife you in the back. Who knows what we had to base this on? But you just had this general feeling toward Stone: that if he said something, you couldn't really believe it. Now, the other man that came in, we could. I don't know why. The man that the students really liked was the Alumni man, who was on for quite a while, Farnham

Johnston: Griffiths. We all had tremendous respect for him. He was marvelous. We all just adored him. When he would talk, you would listen to him, you knew he was saying something that was worth listening to. He went off, then we had Art Harris, or else Art Harris was his replacement.

Nathan: Would the other dean be Edwin C. Voorhies?

Johnston: Yes, that was the other one.

Nathan: So he actually came and sat on the Committee?

Johnston: He sat on the Committee. Stone went off and went in the Navy, and then Voorhies took his place. Voorhies was very tough, but we always figured he spoke for Sproul and the University as a whole. I am sure he did. He undoubtedly had orders: don't let them do this--that kind of thing. That was reasonable. And we fought hard with him.

Nathan: Do you remember the controversy about Town Hall of the Lawns?

Johnston: Oh, yes. I was mixed up in that too.

Nathan: Do you remember Ed Howden organizing it?

Johnston: Yes.

Nathan: What were you doing?

An Experimental Seminar

Johnston: When I was a freshman, at the end of my first semester, I

Johnston: decided I would work. I hadn't, my first semester, because I thought maybe I needed all the time to study, since I had been out of school for a couple of years. I went down to NYA [National Youth Authority] and tried to get an NYA job. Everybody had them, and it was nice, easy work. Twenty-five cents an hour. So they sent me over to Agricultural Economics, to a marvelous man whose name I can't think of now.

He was setting up an experimental seminar for juniors and seniors, and they needed a secretary. I was to be the secretary of the seminar. I wish I had had a tape recorder in those days. This was to be a seminar in Social Studies. They had one girl, and about twelve boys in this group, and the professor, and me. They could discuss any subject they wanted in the whole wide world. After they had picked the subject, they each studied it from their own subject angle. Each one came from a different discipline, there was philosophy, and psych, and econ, and engineering--and others in this group. So I was hired as an innocent young stenographer, taking notes. And it turned out that all of these students were quite liberal. I don't know how they happened to have been picked for this seminar, but they were liberal and they were all very bright students. They were supposed to not take notes, but to just talk. I did the note-taking. After taking the notes, I would type them up, then go over them with a graduate student, who had sort of organized the seminar. I

Johnston: worked with him. He would go over my notes and make any corrections.

Nathan: These were shorthand notes?

Johnston: Yes, but I would type up a rough draft. Then they would be dittoed and distributed the next week at the meeting. These students picked civil liberties in California in the period of 1910 to 1920, a fascinating subject. At first they picked civil liberties, then they had to narrow it down in time. The people were so interesting, and so was the discussion. I got the best education out of those discussions. Morrie Glickfeld, who was Welfare Council chairman the next year, was in the seminar. Also a boy named Jack Palmer. He was Student Workers' Federation chairman. He lived at Bowles Hall, and he went around in dirty cords [corduroys] and uncut hair--not as long as the students of today, and everybody was horrified. The editor of the Daily Cal, who was killed in World War II, Ed Tackle, was in that group. There was a girl, Betty Balais, who married Mel Gladstone, who was in the seminar.

I can't think who the others were. It was a very articulate group, to say the least, and I was so fascinated with this, because it was something that I had never been exposed to before. We'd go through the meetings, then they'd all walk over to one of the coffee places on the avenue [Telegraph Avenue] and sit and talk until after midnight.

Johnston: I'd go along even though they all lived on the south side, and I lived over on the north side [of the campus]. But I didn't say anything about this. I'd just go along and sit quietly in a corner and listen to all this great discussion. Then I would walk home by myself across campus, getting in late.

Nathan: You went to the Varsity Coffee Shop, didn't you?

Johnston: On the corner there, yes. It was just terribly fascinating listening to all these people talk, influencing this freshman. At the end of the year the seminar ended and so did my job. This is when they said, "Would you like to be Welfare Council Secretary? We can't pay you, but it's lots of fun." I said, "Fun is great too." That's how I knew this whole group of students who were rather the left wing of the day.

Town Hall of the Lawns

Nathan: Was Ed Howden one of this group?

Johnston: Yes. I think he might have been in that group or else I met him through this group. So, when he started up Town Hall of the Lawns, I remember getting involved in typing up petitions, typing up bulletins. I can't remember how I was so involved, but something must have pushed me into

Johnston: it. And it was very exciting because for awhile it was right by the library corner, over there by the Campanile, opposite South Hall.

Nathan: Then there was the question about whether the loudspeaker bothered classes in South Hall, only there were no classes in South Hall at noon then.

Johnston: Right. They they moved it back over where the Pelican Building is now. And the students just didn't come around as much. Then they tried putting it in Faculty Glade, too. They moved it around two or three places. It did better in Faculty Glade, but I think it finally died back by the art gallery. It was just too much out of the way; nobody could find it. It was very active and very vital at the time, with people talking and getting up and giving their opinions, and bringing their bag lunches.

Nathan: And these were mostly students, or campus people, who participated?

Johnston: Oh, yes. Almost completely. They might have brought in an outside speaker once in awhile, but I don't think very often. It was mostly campus issues, or campus-oriented kinds of things.

Meetings Outside Sather Gate

Johnston: At that time there was a lot of anti-war activity [World

Johnston: War II] going on. Sather Gate meetings were held against the war. But they were off campus, outside Sather Gate. Do you remember going to any of those?

Nathan: Yes, I remember being on the fringe, and watching.

Johnston: I remember particularly one where the band came down and played and tried to break up the meeting. They played loudly, passing by, trying to drown out the speaker. Everybody was very tense: was there going to be a fight or not? I think there wasn't any.

ROTC [the Reserve Officers' Training Corps] was another big issue then. There was a lot of controversy on ROTC.

Nathan: Whether it should be compulsory?

Johnston: Right. Morrie Glickfeld was very involved in that. I don't know whether the Welfare Council was, particularly, but I know he certainly was. There was a lot of feeling at that point about compulsory ROTC.

Nathan: Wasn't it just a year or so ago that it was finally...

Johnston: It was finally taken off compulsory status. Then of course, the agitation all died down when the war started. But that was a big issue then. Compulsory ROTC was probably one of the biggest issues then because there was so much anti-war feeling.

Nathan: There was some interest in the Daily Cal about migratory workers and their housing. Do you recall that?

Johnston: Yes. I think that was only...

Nathan: Perhaps that was only a small group that was terribly interested in it.

Johnston: I was a liberal, and the liberals were always in the middle. I remember having great battles with the Young Communist League people that were here. Almost as many battles with them as I was having with Voorhies and Stone on the other side. I learned then that the liberal's position is the worst in the world. Because you get it from both sides.

I remember being involved in some of the debates that were held--with Justin Vanderlaan, who was chairman of the Young Communist League at that time on the other side. There were small groups around; there was the YPSL--the Young People's Socialist League--and the Student Workers Federation, and the Communist League, the three that were way on the left. And then they would bring up issues that we would fight against. I don't remember anything about the issues now, I'm sorry.

The Issue of ASUC Membership

Johnston: We were always worried about the few people who voted in ASUC elections. We were always worried about getting more participation. We had a very strong Orientation Council,

Johnston: that tried to orient students on the possibilities of activities, to broaden the student participation more. Student body cards were for sale. ASUC membership was not compulsory. It was all voluntary, so there was an aggressive student sales campaign each semester.

Nathan: And you could only get a Daily Cal when you showed your ASUC card.

Johnston: Right. One of the biggest fights we had at this time was over the move to make the ASUC compulsory. This was one of the big, big fights on Ex Committee.

Nathan: Were you for compulsory membership?

Johnston: Oh, no. We were violently against it. Because we felt that the minute that the University got its hands on the money, all these \$10's, then they would have control of ASUC, and we would no longer be able to say, "Tough, if you don't like fifty cents an hour, we can do it anyway." Or, "We want to support this, and it's our money, and you've got no say." There was a big fight. It was one of these nice cloak-and-dagger things. I was only on the edge of this one. Kaki Henck was ASUC vice-president and I was then Welfare Council representative. When she went in as vice-president, she didn't have any secretarial help, so she said, "Why don't you set up an activity?" So I set up an activity called Secretariat, which got girls to come in and be secretaries, answer phones, take messages, and

Johnston: type. So I was working as head of that activity out of her office, as well as being on Welfare Council. This was how I got involved in this. Any business of finance committee was secret. You weren't supposed to talk about what went on in finance committee. However, she was on finance committee.

It was brought up in finance committee that, for tax purposes, if we could prove that ASUC was non-profit, we'd save so much money in taxes. If we were to become part of the University, it would show that we were non-profit. The University then would take over the ASUC and we would save all this money. This is what the tax lawyer said. The people in the finance committee, Kaki and the group, looked around and discovered that the tax lawyers for the ASUC happened to be the tax lawyers for the University too. We thought that was terribly, terribly interesting, because we kept feeling that the University wanted to take control of the ASUC.

Maybe they didn't. I don't know, but anyway, we thought they did. The students kept saying, "We don't think this is really necessary." And the lawyer assured them it was. The adults on the group said, yes, it was necessary. So the student members wanted to take this form, or this proposal and show it to another lawyer, and get his opinion. No, the adults wouldn't let them do that. They wouldn't let them take it out and show it to anybody else. This

Johnston: made all of us who knew about it pretty mad. So one day, Kaki went in to the secretary of the General Manager-- Ken Priestley was the General Manager of the ASUC and Marge (I can't remember her last name) was his secretary-- and Kaki said to Marge, "Let me borrow that agreement," (which was about three pages long) "I want to read it over in my office." So she brought it out and we carefully undid the staple and three of us madly typed copies of each page. Then she put the staple back in and returned it. So we had a roughly typed copy and took it to a lawyer in San Francisco. He looked it over and said, "Pish, tosh," and shot holes all through it. I forget who the lawyer was, but he happened to be a Cal graduate, and he was a member of Golden Bear. He got mad at the University and President Sproul for trying to take over the ASUC. I understand he went to a Golden Bear meeting and ripped Sproul up one side and down the other for planning such a low trick on the students. Then this proposal came back, and was defeated eventually, but it took a lot of work. They were going to put it up for a vote to the student body. So then we all had to go out and try to explain to the student body how the University was trying to take over the ASUC on the sly, and that they should vote against it. It was defeated.

So I was highly amused years later when the students gave away the independence of the ASUC. I was really quite

Johnston: upset with them, in the 1950's I guess it was, when they turned it over to the University.

The last thing, which amused me no end, was practically at the end of my career, when I was a graduate student. There was an election in which the graduate students said, "We don't want to be in the ASUC." Was it after that? Was it after it became compulsory? Anyway, at one point, the graduate students all said, "We don't want anything to do with activities, we're too busy." And they voted to be out of it. Now you read that the graduate students are saying, "Why aren't we in it? Let us back in." Back and forth they go. They took all the activities off, and now the activities are gradually getting back on the Senate. It's interesting to watch student activities over the years, because they swing one way, then the other way, then start swinging back again.

Nathan: Do you feel that there is increasing interest in student activities, as such?

Johnston: I don't think so. Although there are students that are still very interested.

The Student Ushering Service

Johnston: Another thing that developed--and this should be on record--

Johnston: was a student ushering service. This was part of Student Welfare Council, accidentally. Mainly because I was in the middle, and brought the two together. There was a lady who worked in the cashier's office--Gertrude Roche. She was very interested in the theater and music. I guess she had been involved in ushering in the opera house, as a volunteer activity, as a part-time activity. By the time I knew her, she was the contact person between the students and the opera house, and a couple of other theaters in San Francisco. If you wanted to go and hear the symphony, you could sign up to usher for a performance any given night that you wanted to. She had arranged with the people that ran the opera house that, say, twelve students, each night, could come over and usher and then hear the performance. They used to take the sign-ups in the music department building, down back of Dwinelle there. And you'd go down there at a certain time and see what vacancies there were for performances of the symphony or the opera, or plays in San Francisco.

So I thought this sounded like a great idea, when I was a graduate student; I didn't know about it when I was an undergraduate. When I came back to school I went to sign up. It seemed to me it was always filled up. All the music majors got in first, and no one else had a chance. Then a few months later I went to work part-time in the cashier's

Johnston: office, and met Mrs. Roche. I didn't know who she was, didn't know that she had been involved in this at all until 1945. She's handled this project now for all those years and even before that. Her part is voluntary; she doesn't get a penny for it. And she now has students ushering all over the Bay Area. She sends them to the Curran, the Geary, the Actors Workshop when there was one, the Stage Door, the Oakland Auditorium, the Berkeley Auditorium, the Opera House, the Opera Ring, all those theaters over there. She goes around and meets the people in charge, talks them into taking University students, agrees that there will be so many each night, eight each night, or ten, or six, or whatever--two, in some small theaters.

About the time I got to know her, she said, "I'm having a terrible time with these music students because they're only signing up their friends, and I think all students should be able to do this and I wish we could have the sign-ups some place else. Have you any ideas?" She talked with the Dean's office, and they didn't have anything particular to suggest. So I said, "Why not the Welfare Council office, it's all for student welfare. It will fit in. I happen to know the chairman." So I talked to him, and he thought it was a good idea; so they set up a committee to work on ushering. It's still actively going.

Johnston: She sends I don't know how many dozens who go out to usher every night. But she, at the time I first knew her, was stamping all those tickets herself. There is a little ticket for each night, and you have to stamp the ticket with the play and the date and whether it is the evening performance or the matinee; I would stay after work, or take my lunch hour, and stamp tickets for her because I thought she was overworked and underpaid. This was her hobby, she liked it, she wanted to keep on doing it, even after she retired from the University payroll five or six years ago. The students took the sign-ups and handed out the tickets. Now students get a membership card, and they have to agree to meet certain standards: the girls have to wear black dresses, and the men have to wear suits and ties, or sport coats and ties; they have to be at the theater an hour before the performance starts. There are certain things they have to agree to do. If the students don't show up, then Mrs. Roche gets the blame for it, because she commits herself to producing so many ushers, and the theater managers expect them. I have done this ushering for many years.

 For something that I want to see that I don't have tickets for, I'll go, and she'll sign me up as an usher. The theater managers need the people that come to usher. They expect these people to usher, and you might work quite

Johnston: hard while you're there. Some nights if it's not a very good play or a slow night you might not do much of anything, but some nights if the play is a good play or in demand, and it's filled up, you work quite hard for half an hour or so. Mrs. Roche collects all the cards from all these theaters that the students hand in, and she checks them to make sure that everybody came who said he was coming. It's a tremendous amount of work.

She is really a marvelous woman. She is married, but has no children, I think, at least I never heard of any. She's given this service to the students for years and years and years, and she's enabled hundred and hundreds and hundreds of students to see plays, to hear the symphony, to see opera in San Francisco, that would never have had an opportunity otherwise. Yet she takes no credit for this. Nobody knows that she does this, except the few students she works with. It's all behind the scenes. I have always thought, "Now, here's a person who has contributed so much to student life, and the students don't know anything about it."

I've tried to help her myself by providing her with a free parking pass. I felt the least the campus could do-- now that she has to drive up from Oakland where she lives, to work with the students every few days, to bring up tickets and collect tickets, and talk to them about their

Johnston: procedure--was to provide her with a place to park, so she wouldn't have to run out to a parking meter every hour. I felt the Chancellor should be able to give her a pass--now his office does this each year. All she gets out of this whole thing is a free place to park.

But she's just great, and I think it's wonderful, and it's a shame that nobody knows about this. Although she's very modest, she's a real character. But she's all heart, just a wonderful person. Now it is set up so that it works in with the ticket office at the Student Union. For awhile it was down in Eshleman basement, where they used to hand out the Daily Cals in our day. It was very inconvenient down there. It was way off the beaten track; kids couldn't find it or didn't come, and again she said, "You know, a lot of students want to sign up and they can't, because they can't find the place." So then, when they were building the Student Union, she kept saying, "I hope they have a good place for us over there, where the students can find us easily." Then at the last minute, they didn't have any place for them at all. And I was kind of upset about it. She was not asking for herself. All she wanted was a place easily accessible to students, so that they could sign up easily. So now they've finally worked it out in the Student Union.

As I said before, ushering became a Welfare Council

Johnston: activity, because it takes a lot of work behind the scenes; to make sure you've got the sign-up sheets ready for each night. They have to be filled. If they are not filled, if it's a poor play, as some of them are, then Mrs. Roche has to go out and find people other places. The theaters have tried having San Francisco State students usher, and finally stopped that, because some of them were not reliable. She is reliable; when she says ten will be there to usher, ten will show up. I don't know where she finds them. And she's also expanded it. She saves one night a month for the medical school students. She'll say, "Now, the second Monday, I save for the medical school." And I think Hastings Law School students get one night a month, too.

In general, I think we are going back to having more students in activities. I think that where there is something to do that is useful and constructive, students will participate in activities. Certainly the band is still going as a student activity, and Glee Club, and Treble Clef. I think a lot of the minor, trivial activities have passed away because people are not interested. But maybe they will make more of those that they are interested in. We were talking about student activities, and I didn't mean to get so involved in Mrs. Roche.

Nathan: It's a good story.

Johnston: I'm glad I thought of it, because I think it should be in a record somewhere. She's going to pass away--I don't know how old she is, she must be in her late sixties by this time--one day she will be gone, then what will happen to the whole thing? The managers will not deal with the students, with good reason. The turnover's too great.

SOCIAL SECRETARY TO THE PRESIDENT'S WIFE

Nathan: Do I understand that you work with Mrs. Kerr in the afternoon?

Johnston: I'm her social secretary. I work from two-thirds time to full time. It's supposedly a sort of half-to-full time job. Today she happens to be in Hong Kong, so that's why I'm not working today. I work when there's work to be done. I might work sixty hours a week if there's some big activity going on.

Nathan: You have to be flexible.

Johnston: Yes. It's a very flexible job. I usually work from about nine-thirty to three or something like that. My daughter is in the fourth grade and goes to school nine to three, and I try to gear my hours to her hours.

Mrs. Kerr and the Faculty Wives Hospitality Group

Nathan: Do you have very much to do with the Faculty Wives hospitality groups or the groups that help foreign students find housing?

Johnston: Yes. Mrs. Kerr started that hospitality group when I was

Johnston: first working for her, so we sort of started it together. I'm not taking any credit for originating the idea. But when she starts something, I usually end up doing the work on it, so [laughter]...each person needs a secretary. It's a big help. I wish I had one. She started that group when she was Chancellor's wife here in 1953 and 1954.

Alumnae Hostesses

Johnston: Then she started another one about six years ago, the Alumnae Hostess group, which is also very interesting.

Nathan: Is this the group that ushers people around the campus?

Johnston: Yes. They are supposed to be hostesses for the University to visiting VIP's. They're not really supposed to be guides, but rather hostesses, representing the University. We were trying to think of a group to do this, and we felt we couldn't ask the faculty wives, because they were already doing so much for the foreign students, and all the faculty wives did this for their personal friends who came here frequently. We decided that the alumnae ladies weren't official, and they might be interested. We each thought of people whom we knew that we thought might be good. We invited a group to have coffee at the Kerr home, and some were interested, and some weren't. I think we found about

Johnston: twenty-five ladies who were interested. One, who was very pregnant at that moment, and had been very active as a student, was Blue and Gold editor Janice Rivers--Kittredge. She was the class of '47, I think. Janice said she couldn't go around with guests because she was going to have a baby, but she'd do the phoning and arranging. She is the chairman of the committee as a result. It's a marvelous group of people, and they have an awfully good time, and I think they enjoy it. I was the liaison person.

Mrs. Kerr said, "I'll keep on supporting it." She would have coffees for them, and get them together. She felt that the alumnae liked the idea that they were part of a special group. They don't get paid for this at all.

Nathan: I know someone who does this, Suzanne Franklin.

Johnston: Oh, yes, she is just darling. So, I was the liaison for this group. For a long time I did a lot of typing for them, until the Berkeley campus took it over. All the alumnae ladies said, "We don't know the campus. We've been away for ten or twenty years." We had to educate them first, so that they could explain the University to the visitors. Janice, and Dora Seu, and I would set up tours of new buildings and areas. I learned so much about the campus that way, it was just great. Really, they do a great job. It's a service which is done on some campuses by students. However, I think the alumnae are better than the students

Johnston: if they are well trained, because they can relate better, particularly if the visitors are older people, for example, if the minister of education from Morocco and his wife need to be toured around. The reason it began was that Mrs. Kerr was going to South America. When she is going someplace, she likes to talk to people who come from there, so she can learn about the country. International Visitors' Service called up one day and said, "There is a man from Peru here." She said, "Well, I'll take him to lunch at the faculty club, and we will talk about Peru." So she met him and took him to lunch. She discovered to her horror--that he was not here under any State Department auspices, he was just looking over colleges where they might send their diplomats to learn English. He had had two interviews with the people here on the campus, and that was all. He had been here four days, in the Bay Area. Nobody had shown him the campus or talked about the University as a whole. All he had had was an hour's discussion on one particular subject. He didn't have any idea of the organization of the University; the students' activities, the University's relations with the state, or anything else.

So Mrs. Kerr had spent the whole afternoon with him, talking to him, touring him around, taking him out to her house. She was terribly upset. She said, "If this happens to him, it must happen to other people; we can't let this

Johnston: happen." It turned out that later she did visit his family in Peru. He was the Peruvian Ambassador to the United Nations then, and so he was in New York. So she didn't see him in Peru. But this is the level on which these alumnae ladies operate. Someone may come through the State Department, a Vice-president of a University--probably not a president, or a group of teachers from Japan.

I've done it once in awhile, just to keep my hand in, and one time I had a charming Welsh couple. He was a high Welsh university official. Another time I took around a group of employees for the USIS [United States Information Service] in South America, gathered from quite a few different countries. They included about six Spanish-speaking young men that the government was sending around the country to get acquainted with the United States, since they worked for the United States. You're not supposed to say, "This is this building and that is that building." But you're supposed to present a total picture and be a hostess to whom they can talk. We've written a booklet called Questions and Answers, which is available up at the West Gate or East Gate. The alumnae hostess group sat down and said, "Now, what kind of questions will these foreigners ask?" So, we tried to think of all the questions the foreigners would ask us, then we went out and found all the answers. This was originally simply dittoed but we

Johnston: found that a lot of other offices wanted copies for their own uses. So now it is printed up in a nice little pamphlet that fits in a man's vest pocket. About once a year we re-do it, and bring the figures up to date: how many students at the campuses, a new Chancellor, everything we've got that needs to be changed. Then the ladies make suggestions of additional information they have needed in talking with visitors and we improve it.

For example, when you look at a building, say, Barrows Hall, you don't know what departments are in the building-- and it can be quite embarrassing when asked this by a visitor. Now we have a list of all the buildings and the major departments that are in them. A supply is kept at either gate to the campus, and anybody can get a copy. It's quite widely used.

Nathan: Do you have anything to do with the Save the Bay organizations?

Johnston: Not really. Since I work for the University, I joke with Mrs. Kerr. I say, "Once you get in that Bay, I can't get you out to do any University work--you're so deep in that Bay." So she says, "You take care of the University, and I'll worry about the Bay." So I work very hard on University things, and she works very hard on the Bay. I am interested in it because my Master's thesis was in city and regional planning, and particularly in regional government. As a private citizen I'm involved in this, but not in my work.

Nathan: You have a hand in so many things these days, it's no wonder you enjoy your work. I see it's time for you to meet your daughter, but thanks for all you've managed to remember in this brief visit.

Transcriber: Bayle Emlein

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